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LETTER DATED 1 APRIL 1999 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to inform you of my decision to appoint His Excellency Mr. Moustapha Niasse (Senegal) as my Special Envoy for the Democratic Republic of the Congo Peace Process. Mr. Naisse's mandate will be to:

(a) Further demonstrate to the leaders concerned my interest in and commitment to the regional efforts directed at restoring peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo;

(b) Assess progress made in the Lusaka process, and ascertain the positions of the parties towards a peaceful settlement of the conflict;

(c) Identify the main obstacles to signing the ceasefire agreement;

(d) Have a wide range of contacts with Congolese political and civil leaders with the aim of making an assessment of the prospects for broader political participation and national reconciliation through the internal democratic process and an inclusive political dispensation;

(e) Sound out African leaders on the role, if any, the United Nations, and especially the Security Council and myself, could play in promoting a negotiated settlement; if so, what should be the form and substance of that role;

(f) Ascertain the type of support countries outside Africa are prepared to extend in order to promote a peaceful settlement of the conflict, and whether they are ready to support materially and financially, through a trust fund or otherwise, a distinct United Nations role in peacemaking for the Democratic Republic of the Congo;

(g) Report to me on his mission, and submit recommendations on practical measures that the United Nations, the Security Council and myself could take to assist or complement the existing peace initiatives.

A former Prime Minister and long-serving Foreign Minister of his country, Mr. Niasse will bring to his mission the authority of the statesman, the experience of the diplomat, and a deep commitment to peace in Africa. He has accepted to start his mission urgently, and is expected to leave New York about

10 April after a week of consultations at United Nations Headquarters. Mr. Niasse will be assisted by my Representative for the Great Lakes Region, Mr. Berhanu Dinka.

I should like to emphasize that my decision to appoint a Special Envoy was taken in close consultation with His Excellency Mr. Salim A. Salim, Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, and His Excellency Mr. Frederick J. T. Chiluba, President of Zambia, who has been spearheading with great energy and dedication the peace process initiated by the Southern African Development Community. Allow me, Mr. President, to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the efforts of the many African leaders who have worked towards a peaceful settlement of the latest conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo since it erupted in August 1998.

I should be grateful if you could bring this information to the attention of the members of the Council and convey to them my hope that their Governments will grant their full diplomatic and political support to my Special Envoy during his challenging mission.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN